

CURRENTLY PENDING CLAIMS

7. (Amended) A method for treating an infection of HCV comprising administering to a patient a therapeutically effective amount of a CD81 protein, or a functional equivalent thereof, to reduce the infectivity of the virus.
27. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the functional equivalent has at least 80% sequence identity to the human CD81 amino acid sequence depicted in Figure 1.
28. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the functional equivalent is a soluble form of the CD81 protein.
29. (New) The method of claim 28, wherein the soluble form of the CD81 protein comprises a deletion of one or more of the transmembrane binding domains depicted as TM1, TM2, TM3 and TM4 in Figure 1.
30. (New) The method of claim 29, wherein the soluble form of the CD81 protein comprises amino acids 113-201 of the human CD81 amino acid sequence depicted in Figure 1.
31. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the CD81 protein comprises the human CD81 amino acid sequence depicted in Figure 1.